



State of Connecticut

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*Testimony by Representative Charles Ferraro
Before the Public Safety and Security Committee
In Support of Senate Bill 258
March 10, 2022*

Good morning Chairmen Horn and Osten, Ranking Members Champagne and Howard, and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Charles Ferraro, I am the current State Representative for the 117th General Assembly District for the City of West Haven, Orange and Milford. I will be testifying at today's public hearing in support of SB258. My written testimony as well as, my public testimony will provide some clarifying comments.

The City of West Haven has been attempting to acquire a vehicle suited to serve the community in various means since 2011. Being a shoreline community, we have experienced numerous devastating storms such as Sandy, Irene, and snowstorm Nemo. These storms caused flooding, downed trees, and debris as well as a historical snow fall total. The West Haven Police Department has looked at several vehicles over the years but either the cost of transportation or the vehicle's condition prohibited the acquisition.

I have discussed this vehicle in length with the Fire Chiefs of the City along with the City's Emergency Management Director and other City Officials. All agree that a vehicle such as this is a necessity for this community.

This intended usage for this vehicle is to be used for lifesaving measures. Whether it is for a natural disaster or an active shooter the main role this vehicle will play is the saving of human life. Having this vehicle in the Police Department's fleet will be an enormous asset to provide for the safety and security of the residents and visitors to our City.

There is much misunderstanding surrounding the acquisition of such vehicles. While this vehicle is called an MRAP and its acronym stands for Mine-Resistant Utility Vehicle, its intended use by the West Haven Police Department is not for mine sweeping activity but, rather for emergency rescue missions. In fact, this vehicle has been stripped of all its military armaments including one layer of armor. The only thing this vehicle will be equipped with is first aid equipment and gurneys to assist in rescue missions. Furthermore, the West Haven Police Department is only a phone call away and looks forward to sharing this asset with other shoreline communities should the need arise.

Last year on April 13, 2021 the Branford police became engaged in a shootout with an active shooter who barricaded himself in a building in the Main Street and Cherry Hill area of the town. The police were met with a constant barrage of gunfire from the upper floor of the business and apartment building. It was an endless cycle of gunfire which included hundreds of rounds from multiple firearms. Many other civilians were terrified as they were in the vicinity of the gunfire. Many nearby vehicles and homes were damaged. Aswin Patel, a civilian, was wounded and luckily survived the event.

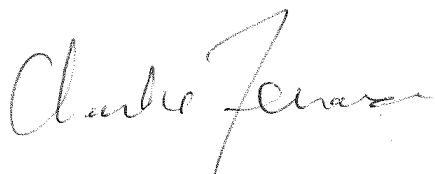
Police officers were pinned down in the attack and could not move without risking getting hit by the attacker's gunfire. A vehicle similar to the MRAP vehicle mentioned in this bill was used to shield the officers and to get them to safety, thereby more than likely saving lives that day.

A public hearing was held at a Board of Police Commissioners meeting regarding this vehicle. Speaking in favor of the vehicle were the Chiefs of the three Fire Districts in the City, the Emergency Management Director and read into the record was a letter from a prior Mayor who led the City during the storms.

I am asking the Committee and the Legislative Body to favorably act on the transfer of this vehicle to the West Haven Police Department.

Thank you for your dedication and for indulging me in this testimony. I wish to express my support for the legislation and ask for the committee's favorable action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles Ferraro". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Rep. Charles Ferraro